VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

MAY 1995 ONE DOLLAR

Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr.

Whether you're fishing, water-skiing, or simply catching the rays on the helm, it's hard to beat the thrill of an all-day outing in your boat. With seemingly endless miles of waterways flowing along Virginia's eastern shore or on the many lakes and rivers scattered throughout the state, outdoor enthusiasts have plenty of boating opportunities available to them. Virginia's waterways are experiencing an increasing demand by a growing number of recreational boaters seeking to have a good time on the water. Part of the good times on the river, lake, or ocean means practicing safe-boating techniques which are designed to ensure that your boating experience is nothing but the best.

At the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, an important part of our mission is to provide all citizens the opportunity to enjoy boating and related outdoor recreation and to promote safety for persons and property involved in boating activities. The staff at VDGIF is committed to ensuring that your boating experience is pleasant, memorable, and, most importantly, safe. With this in mind, I'd like to focus on the "job" of safe boating and how our efforts at VDGIF address boating safety.

The job of safe boating requires increased awareness through public education and continual reminders about safety and individual responsibility. A key ingredient to this ongoing effort is National Safe Boating Week, sponsored by the National Safe Boating Council and the U.S. Coast Guard. This year's week-long special focus on boating education will be observed on May 20 thru 26. Across the country, boating safety specialists will coordinate their efforts to provide information on boating safety. The timing of the campaign is critical since the safety message will be heard prior to Memorial Day weekend, a popular boating day and one that often yields a higher risk for accidents.

The central theme to this year's campaign is "It Won't Work If You Don't Wear It! Life Jackets Save Lives." The message emphasizes the importance of wearing personal flotation devices. National Safe Boating Week activities include:

- Information promoting the new federal law which requires a wearable life jacket for all passengers on boats of all sizes (effective May 1, 1995)
- A 'PFD and Kids' campaign which serves as a summer reminder that youngsters should wear a life jacket when the boat is underway
- A campaign focused on autumn on-the-water activities, with a special emphasis on life jacket use for hunters and fall anglers

At VDGIF, we recognize that National Safe Boating Week programs should not be limited to simply one week during the year. VDGIF efforts in boating education are conducted year-round, with special emphasis on holiday weekends. With over 1 million boaters on Virginia's waterways each year, our Boating Education program has been popular and continues to expand as we target more boaters with our boating safety message. Our primary instructional methods for boating education use the following approaches:

- A youth-based program emphasizing water and boating safety is taught in approximately 45 public and private elementary schools throughout Virginia. Over 10,000 sets of material, including a teaching guide and student activity books, have been distributed.
- More than 540 Volunteer Instructors teach the comprehensive 8-hour "Virginia Boating Basics" course. Instructors include members of the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Power Squadron, teachers, rescue, fire, and police departments.

Statistics reveal that our boating education efforts have been extremely successful. We have reached more boaters with our safety message than ever before; the national average for registered boat owners having taken a boating safety course is 19 percent—in Virginia, it's 34 percent. In 1994, 26,750 boaters or potential boaters received some form of boating safety education. This figure represents an increase of 2,358 (8.8percent) over the preceding year. Also impressive is the fact that the number of boating fatalities in Virginia have significantly declined, even though the number of registered boats are on the rise. Through these education programs, we are able to raise public awareness concerning boating safety and, as a result, we can help make your boating experience both safe and pleasurable. □

*Rachel and Dick Anderson have created a paradise for humans **and** wildlife on their land in Caroline County. Turn to page 4 for details; photo by Dwight Dyke.*

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Back cover: May 20-26 is National Safe Boating Week! Photo by Soc Clay.

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Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

VOLUME 56 NUMBER 5

The Promised Land

Rachel and Dick Anderson Create a Paradise for Wildlife in Caroline County

by Nancy Hugo
Photographs by Dwight Dyke
Illustrations by Ruth Ray

If you didn't know Dick Anderson was a religious man, the signboards on the country road that leads you to Palestine Farm would let you know. Verses from the Old Testament pop up like Burma Shave signs along this Caroline County road, but the sign on the farm fencepost is more subtle. Into the wood of a slate-roofed bluebird house, a careful hand has burned the name "Palestine Farm." Although the signboard messages may be wasted on the birds, the message of the birdhouse is clear. This is the promised land.

The scope of what Dick and Rachel Anderson have wrought at their 200-acre farm near Penola is hard to imagine. For starters, know that they have counted "160 some" species of birds (from wrens to eagles and egrets) on the property. At one time they had an $80 a week birdfood habit. Plus, when Dick Anderson decides to attract bluebirds, he doesn't put up one bluebird house, he puts up 40.

*Dick Anderson sometimes makes birdhouses out of hollow logs (**opposite inset**). He cuts the log into a birdhouse-sized section, drills an entrance hole (or lets a knot fall out), then adds a roof and floor of tin. Tin, he says, makes a better roof than copper because it reflects heat. **Above:** Purple coneflower and field sparrow.*

The investment of time in this wildlife paradise is extraordinary. In season, Rachel works in the extensive gardens surrounding the antebellum farmhouse an average of 10-12 hours a day. "It's like farming," she says. "When it's time to do something, it's time to do it." Because she's been known to put in 125 flats (yes, that's 125 *flats* not 125 plants) of impatiens at once, she sometimes has to work through the night. So, Dick has installed floodlights under the eaves of the house to illuminate the yard.

Although not every wildlife gardener wants to commit himself to such a large or labor-intensive project, the lessons a backyard gardener can learn from the Andersons are legion. How to use found objects as birdhouses, how to provide cover, how to deal with pests: all of these are subjects the Andersons have approached with the

PALESTINE

same energy and interest they've invested in Palestine Farm.

The garden beds around Palestine Farm look as well-manicured as those at a botanical garden, and Rachel points out to the unpracticed eye the place where the squirrels have trampled the impatiens while going after the fallen apples. However, even unpracticed eyes will soon begin to see something unusual about the place: its abundance of birdhouses, vines, and snag trees.

Snags (the rotting trunks of trees that have long since lost most of their limbs) surround the house like aging sentinels. These snags, so often torn down as eyesores in suburbia, have been allowed to age into hoary shapes that look as natural as grandparents on this hill. Up them grow vines like silver lace vine, traveler's joy, and Virginia creeper.

"The only thing holding that one up is the vine," says Rachel of one particularly venerable specimen. At the base of the tree, now barely visible, is the chicken wire that once helped the young silver lace vine start up the tree.

Only Mother Nature (and a good wildlife gardener) would have left these snags standing. Full of bugs, holes, and rotten cavities, they're a mecca for birds in search of food, nesting places, and shelter. A shelf fungus provides a porch roof over one hole. The flat top of another snag provides a platform for a courting wood duck.

"The drake sits on top there and does his ritual dance. He pats his feet and moves his neck like this," says Dick, simulating the motion with his hands. "Friends say, 'Why don't you cut those old stumps down?' I say, 'You out of your mind?'!"

Because of their affection for them, wood ducks are one species the Andersons have taken particular pains to attract to their property. A ¾-acre pond, two creeks, a marsh, and half-mile proximity to the Mattaponi River contribute to their success, but it's the nesting places Dick and Rachel have provided that have allowed them to watch Disney-like wildlife spectacles from their second-story window.

According to the Andersons, wood duck nesting preferences in-

Above: *Although she and her husband Dick have lived, gardened, and watched wildlife at Palestine Farm for 31 years, Rachel Anderson didn't really plunge into gardening until 1988, the year she took the Master Gardener course in Hanover County. "The hobby got out of control," she says. "She went bonkers in 1988," Dick confirms.*

Opposite: *No opportunity is lost to provide a nesting place or a good meal for birds at Palestine Farm.* ***Illustration:*** *Eastern phoebe on false solomon's seal.*

Rob Simpson

A Bird in Hair

Not a thing that could benefit a bird is wasted at Paradise Farm—not even a hair. Having noticed that the livestock hair that gets stuck to barbed wire is something birds use in their nests, Rachel Anderson started saving her own hair for the birds. "You can use an empty tissue box," she says. "Just stuff hair in every time you clean your brush."

One impatient titmouse didn't wait for Rachel's hair to make it into the tissue box; he took hair directly from her head. "He got down in there and buried himself in my hair. We took a picture and you could just see his tail sticking out. Man, he would rare back and just yank."

But, she adds, "they'll only do it when they're gathering for the nest."

Dick tells a hair-raising titmouse tale, too. One day while lying shirtless in a hammock, he noticed a titmouse perched on the hammock rope above his head, so he decided to conduct an experiment. He put some raisins on his chest and waited. Sure enough, the titmouse hopped onto his chest, nibbled a few raisins, then tried to pull hair right out of his chest.

clude holes in trees, crude wooden boxes, and specially designed barrels—in that order. "It's unreal how a wood duck can enter that hole at 30 miles per hour," says Rachel gazing up at one hole in a snag. "They (the male and female) come in flying together. Then she just goes 'zoop' right in it."

In addition to providing snags, the Andersons design and make wood duck houses made of hollow logs or scrap lumber. In the crotch of a healthy tree, for example, Dick has propped up a hollow log about 15" in diameter and 28" tall with a 4" oval hole in its side and a crude top made of tin. For nesting, this (or a more traditional box made of scrap lumber) is what the Andersons have found to be the wood duck's second choice.

The wood duck's third choice is a nesting place Dick fashions out of 14-gallon grease drums. Up to the small entrance hole in the side of the drum, he puts a little piece of wire or rough board to serve the ducklings as a ladder. Strapped to the tree about 20' off the ground, this nesting place has provided the background of the following dramas: "I was working in the garden underneath it," says Rachel, "when I heard a noise that made me look up. The mother duck came out of the barrel with a baby duck in her mouth. She flew toward the swamp with it in her mouth and in a minute came back and got another one."

Another time, Rachel was in the garden nearby when ducklings "floated down" to the ground for the first time from the same barrel. "You know, they're nothing but a ball of fluff," she says. "They float down like leaves." From across the lawn, Rachel watched as the ducklings lined up behind their mother and headed off to the stream.

A wood duck box the Andersons don't recommend is a plastic one. Says Dick, "They cook the baby ducks."

Everywhere a visitor looks at Palestine Farm, there are birdhouses nailed to trees, rising from poles, attached to buildings. Knowing that "wrens will nest in any little cubbyhole," the Anderson's also have become expert at providing cubbyholes. Avid collectors of old tools and any other "found object" that will provide a nesting place, the Andersons have, for example, lined the side of an old outbuilding with discarded objects like a wooden Coke crate, the condenser from an old still, and a wire calf muzzle, in

which a bird can build a nest.

Many of these are objects that Dick, a lightning-rod salesman, has found in his travels. The old earthen jug with a hole in the side that a farm wife might have discarded years ago becomes a beautiful birdhouse hanging from the rafters of an Anderson outbuilding. So does an old cow skull. In the woods, Dick has hung several hundred tennis ball cans that he's turned into birdhouses. He sprays them green, cuts a hole in the plastic cap, and ties them horizontally to tree limbs.

In their 31 years at Palestine Farm, the Andersons have learned a bit about more conventional birdhouses, too. Although gourds hang from many trees, Rachel says that as they rot away she doesn't intend to replace them. "Birds don't use them," she says. "Bees and flying squirrels do."

They have had success with the scores of bluebird houses they've hung. Dick reports having once counted over 20 bluebirds perched at one time on the fence along the driveway. A tip they've recently decided to try to keep snakes from raiding their bluebird houses is to put a dusting of sulfur on the birdhouse floor.

They've also learned that sometimes no matter how hard you work, you can't attract the birds you want. Case in point: the Andersons unoccupied 24-compartment, cedar-shake roofed, purple martin house. "I've built two ponds to attract them," says Dick. "All my neighbors have them, but to my knowledge, a sparrow hasn't even nested in that house."

The Andersons' signature birdhouse is a cedar bluebird house with slate roof and slate floor (Dick calls it a slate foyer). A screw in the bottom allows the floor to be removed for cleaning. These are the houses that, when Dick and Rachel go rabbit hunting, they give landowners who let them hunt their property. Into the front of each house, Dick inscribes the name of the property.

Some lucky companions may also get a hat or patch emblazoned with the message, "I hunted with Rachel's dogs," because Rachel Anderson's dogs are not only legendary in rabbit hunting circles, they're a central "landscape element" at Palestine Farm. The shed where these 15 beagles live is certainly the poshest habitat (besides the farmhouse) on the place.

"Five generations are sitting on that step," Rachel says proudly of the dogs she trains and raises. Not only is the exercise yard around the dog shed immaculate, but "shed" seems a misnomer for this abode. The size of a country post office, it has fresh paint, hanging plants, a front and back porch.

Rabbit hunting is another passion of the Andersons, which ranks right up there with encouraging wildlife habitat on their farm. Those invited to hunt with Rachel and Dick's beagles ***(top)*** *count themselves lucky indeed.* ***Opposite:*** *The Anderson farmhouse.* ***Illustration:*** *Carolina wren on daylily.*

In addition to providing nesting places, in order to draw in the game and songbirds they love, the Andersons also provide food, primarily in the landscape and not from feeders. The expense of buying bird food (100 lbs. of sunflower seed and 15 lbs. of thistle seed a week) had become exorbitant and, they realized, unnecessary. "Why are we doing this?" Dick says he asked himself one day. "God has been feeding the birds for millions of years."

The Andersons had also discovered that by drawing small birds up close to the house with birdseed,

they were drawing in the hawks that preyed on them. "It didn't seem fair," says Rachel. Now, other than occasionally scattering corn for doves and crows, scattering birdseed after a heavy snow, and providing hummingbird feeders, the Andersons let their landscape do the bird feeding for them.

Many of the vines that hang from the Anderson's trees provide both food and cover. Virginia creeper, for example, almost completely covers one old locust tree and its vines drip with dark blue berries. Interestingly, this is a food source the birds planted themselves when a seed fell into a crotch of the tree and germinated.

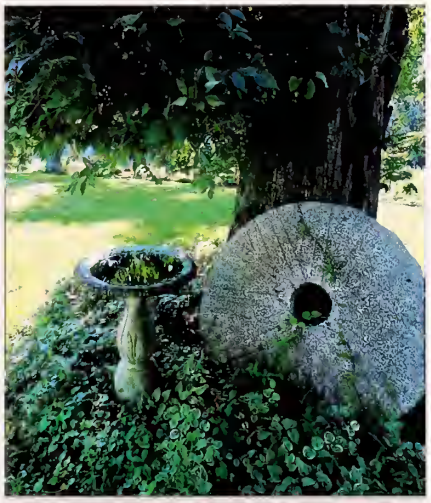
Arbors loaded with grapevines also provide cover, tangles for nesting, and food. "Turkeys eat the grapes," says Rachel, "and I know a fox has been in the yard at night eating the grapes, because the dogs go crazy." Rachel can even enjoy the concord grapes right off the vine herself, since she doesn't spray them.

Other vines that climb fences, scale trees, and mount arbors at Palestine Farm include jasmine, ornamental honeysuckle, climbing fern, morning glory, hyacinth bean, Thunbergia (Black-eyed Susan vine), climbing bleeding heart, passion flower, climbing hydrangea, clematis, trumpet vine, silver lace vine, moon vine, wisteria, cypress vine, and English ivy.

The Andersons also select shrubs and trees with wildlife value. Along each side of the drive approaching the farm is the gray foliage of autumn olive, a shrub the Andersons selected because it was recommended as a berry-bearing wildlife food. Unfortunately, the Andersons are beginning to see how quickly this shrub grows and spreads, but they've watched too many turkeys feed on these berry-laden branches to want to remove the shrubs.

Virginia red cedar (juniper), dogwood, and chinaberry are other trees the Andersons value as sources of wildlife food. One Christmas Dick and Rachel made a perfectly shaped red cedar Christmas tree by attaching branches laden with blue berries to a chicken wire frame. After the holidays, they put the tree on the front porch where a flock of cedar waxwings descended upon it to feast on the berries. Dick still prizes his photo of the cedar waxwings clinging to the tree like golden ornaments. "If you want to draw 'em in, plant juniper," he says.

Rachel's flower gardens, which include lush beds near the house and a football field-sized horticultural area behind the house, also



Homeowners Helping Wildlife

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has long been involved in helping people who want to help wildlife. **The Environmental Education Program** has assisted thousands of Virginian's in establishing and enhancing wildlife habitat. Each year, educational seminars about wildlife, how to establish, restore and enhance habitat, how to create specialized gardens, and how to enjoy the outdoors are offered to the public. There is also a great deal of literature available dealing with plants, wildlife and habitats, free for your use. For large wildlife habitat projects, usually involving large, 100-acre-plus properties, on-site visitation by the program coordinator is arranged on an availability basis.

It doesn't matter if you are a school, a civic group, a scout, a homeowner association, a corporation, a family, a hunt club or a farmer. You can, and should, do something for wildlife and our environment. You can plant food-bearing trees and shrubs, put in a flower garden for hummingbirds, bees and butterflies, or establish a fencerow for small mammals and songbirds to take refuge in. Everybody can do something.

If you would like more information on literature or other assistance available from the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, send a **typed mailing label**, along with your specific project idea to: Jeff Curtis, VDGIF, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230-1104.

Above: *Dick Anderson fashions wood duck nesting boxes out of 14-gallon grease drums. Snags* ***(right)*** *surround the Andersons house, providing bugs and rotten cavities for birds in search of food, nesting places, and shelter. Vines like silver lace vine, traveler's joy, and Virginia creeper transform snags into breathtaking monuments to old age.* ***Illustration:*** *Ruby-throated hummingbird.*

provide food for birds and nectar sources for butterflies. Tiger swallowtails add their yellow wings to the spectacle of lavender butterfly bush flowers entwined with 'Heavenly Blue' morning glories rising from rows of red and pink garden phlox.

And this isn't the garden's peak season. Rachel, who welcomes visitors to the garden, plans for most of her flowering annuals and perennials to peak with the daylilies, around the fourth of July. Last year, she says, although the gardens were beautiful at that time, their show was almost upstaged by goldfinches who enraptured visitors by lingering over the poppies.

Even the cover crop Rachel uses in her gardens attracts wildlife. Annual buckwheat, often used by Rachel and others to hold soil through the winter, is something Rachel uses in the summer, too. She sometimes plants buckwheat among her ornamentals to fill in the way a flowering annual would. According to Rachel, bees love the delicate white buckwheat flowers, and doves and turkeys feed on the grain. The buckwheat, later turned into the soil, also contributes to its richness.

If all this sounds like Eden without the snake, it isn't. Anyone who has tried to create a wildlife-friendly garden knows that sometimes one gets more wildlife than he or she has planned on, and that the deer looking so beautiful silhouetted against the hemlocks look less appealing nibbling on the hollyhocks. In addition to most of the rewards of landscaping for wildlife, Rachel and Dick Anderson have experienced most of its frustrations.

Yes, they have squirrels, voles, deer, groundhogs, hornets. What do they do about voles? "Cuss 'em," says Rachel. She also once resorted to pelleted poison, but stopped using it when she discovered a dead squirrel. Instead, she resigns herself to not growing some of the things they like best—like tulips, crocus, and hyacinths.

The Andersons are not purists; they have been known to kill a groundhog and spray Sevin on a burgeoning insect population, but they are also always looking for better solutions. To deter deer from eating ornamentals, for example, Rachel adds liquid detergent to the fertilizer mix she uses. "Ivory soap has a smell they don't like," she says. "I mix a half cup of it [liquid detergent without phosphate] with Miracle Grow and put it in the proportioner that goes on my water hose." Every time she feeds her plants, she is hoping to make them distasteful to deer.

The Andersons have also learned to appreciate what they can't control. For example, in addition to his picture of the juniper covered with cedar waxwings, Dick Anderson treasures a photo he took of a six-foot black snake plundering the nest of a barn swallow that had nested under the back porch eaves. The snake stretches the length of the photo and, facing it down to the left, is a female barn swallow, a blur of frantically beating wings.

"God created everything with a purpose and a place," says Dick Anderson. One can imagine the wildlife at Palestine Farm responding "Amen." □

Nancy Hugo is a freelance writer who lives in Ashland and writes a weekly gardening column for the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

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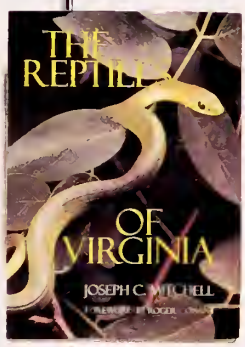

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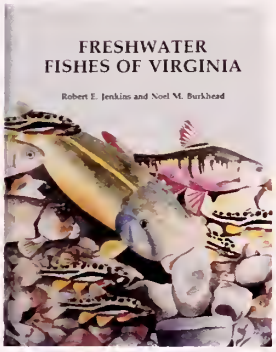

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Jump Fishing

by Gerald Almy

White mist swirled over the dark green water's surface as Dale Wilson, Ralph Key, and I cruised slowly out of Old Woman Creek and entered the main body of Leesville Lake. There was not a boat in sight, so we knew it couldn't be a wake we were seeing disturbing the surface a quarter mile away.

"Get down boys!" Dale ordered. "Those are fish."

In seconds we were skimming across the placid lake surface under 150 horsepower. Less than two minutes after we saw the commotion, we were easing to a halt and drifting into casting range. Dozens, perhaps hundreds of fish were breaking into a huge school of shad on the surface, thrashing and throwing whitewater spray 15 feet in the air.

It was a scene of sheer chaos. Other than a school of tarpon off Costa Rica, this was by far the most awesome school of game fish I had ever encountered crashing into bait on the surface. Some shad skipped frantically over the top of the lake. Others floated haplessly, wounded but not yet consumed by the greedy striped bass tearing into other tiny silver baitfish below.

Fish won't always be jumping on the surface of big lakes, but when they are, you need to be ready for them.

Dale laughed as he connected on his first cast. I arched out a cast with my 3/8-ounce white bucktail. One thump telegraphed up the line as I reeled in slowly, but there was no solid hookup.

As the surface continued to boil in a froth around us, we soon landed two 26 and 27½-pound glistening stripers.

By then the fish had sounded, but we soon relocated them tearing into bait further down lake, and scored on several more large striped bass, along with a pair of chunky white bass.

Though I had dabbled in it briefly before, this was my true baptism into the sport of jump fishing, downstream from Smith Mountain Lake on the Roanoke River. Stripers were the main quarry that day, and that fish is the most common species caught jump fishing in Virginia. But other fish can also be taken with this technique, including largemouth

bass, white bass, and even brown and rainbow trout.

Before going into tactics for catching these different species, a definition of jump fishing might be in order. It is, after all, not a very common fishing technique, and one which some anglers might not be too familiar with.

"Jump fishing" means searching a lake's surface for fish breaking water as they crash into schools of baitfish such as shad, minnows, or alewives. The number of fish may range from one or two sporadically nabbing a minnow on top every few minutes, to hundreds of fish herding bait from the bottom up to the surface. With the prey surrounded, the attackers can simply slash and twist, opening their mouths almost randomly to slurp down the silvery baitfish.

On a reduced scale, you can jump fish in small and medium-sized lakes by watching for slashing fish, then quickly casting a lure to the disturbance. The most exciting sport, though, takes place on larger waters where big schools of predator fish roam an open lake and feed on a grand scale, sometimes disturbing an acre or more of water with their crashing and feeding. Some of the top lakes in Virginia for jump fishing are Leesville, Claytor, Smith Mountain, Gaston, Anna, Buggs Island and Moomaw.

You can potentially find fish breaking on the surface virtually anywhere in these lakes, but the lower waters near the dam are often good places to start searching, particularly in the summer. The fish are often hovering deep, but will break out of the cool depths and swim up through the thermocline, even though the surface water is warmer than their comfort level, simply because they need food to survive. The fish rise up, crash into a school of shad quickly, then descend before the warm temperatures become too stressful for them.

I've enjoyed superb jump fishing in the middle of scorching, blistering summer days when the air temperature approached 100. This, however, is not a common occurrence and it's usually fairly short-lived. As waters begin to cool in late summer and early fall and lakes lose their stratification and mix together (the fall turnover), stripers and other game fish can move more freely at all levels, and finding breaking fish on top becomes more and more common.

October through December is the peak period for finding the pin-striped true bass slashing on top. At these times, locating fish in the upper portions of lakes becomes more common. Often they're found near the mouths of feeder inlets and even back in creek arms where they corral shad not only against the lake's surface, but also against the shoreline.

One exception to the fall peak for jump fishing is Lake Moomaw, where late spring through summer is excellent for taking big brown and rainbow trout. The lower and middle portions of the lake are best for taking these roving fish. Moomaw's trout seldom feed in large packs, but rather roam in singles or pairs, sporadically rolling on top to take minnows or alewives.

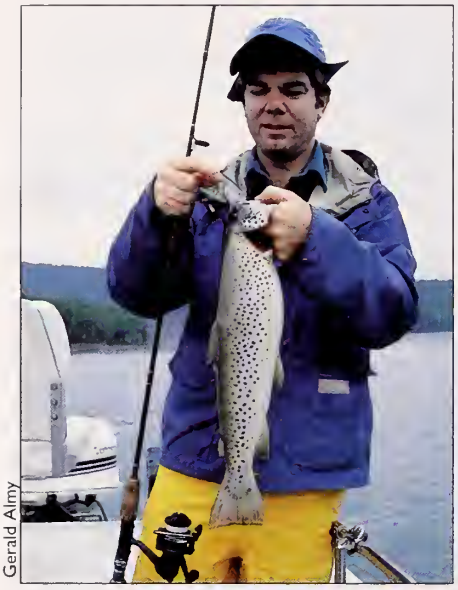
Since trout are a skittish quarry, the best approach is to motor to an area where you see a few fish

Soc Clay

*October through December is the peak period for finding striped bass (**right**) slashing on the surface, but you can take big brown and rainbow trout in Lake Moomaw in the lower and middle portions of the lake on the surface in late spring through summer.*

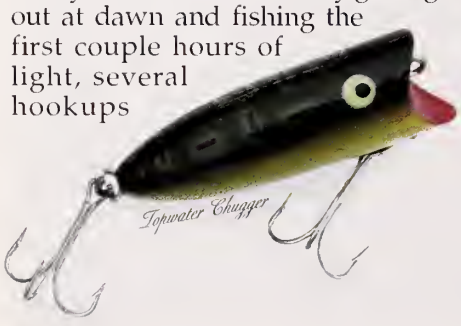
swirling, then kill the outboard and use an electric trolling motor or paddle to ease up to the swirls. Or, you can simply wait for fish to rise close enough to your boat to cast to.

Have an outfit with a lure on it rigged and ready to deliver instantly when you see the surface boil of a feeding trout, casting as close to the disturbance as possible. Jigs, crankbaits and spoons will take


Gerald Almy

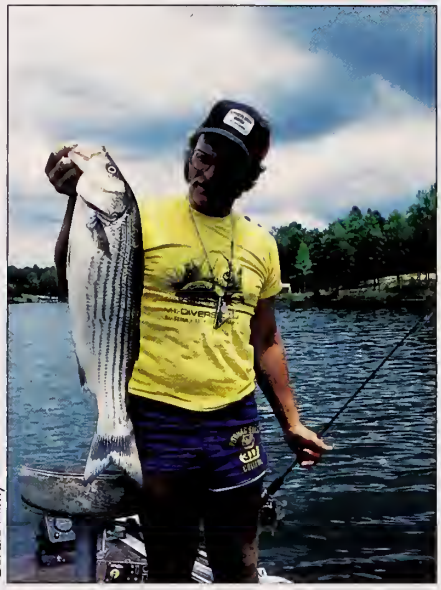
these fish, but the overwhelming first choice of local experts is a thin-minnow plug like a Rapala, Rebel or Redfin, in the 3 to 4-inch size. To deliver these small, light lures you'll need thin line—4 to 6-pound test—and a long spinning rod at least 6 ½ feet.

Cast to the swirl, twitch the lure once, then begin a slow, steady retrieve so the minnow creates a V-wake on the surface. A trout from 2 to 8 pounds could well be your reward. You won't draw a strike every time you cast to a rise, but by getting out at dawn and fishing the first couple hours of light, several hookups



should come your way. Sometimes you may actually see the fish lurch out of the water. If you do, note the direction it's going and cast the lure a couple of feet in front of it before beginning your retrieve.

Thin-minnow plugs are also effective on bass, white bass and stripers when surface fishing. The same sizes used for trout score well on largemouths and whites, but for stripers, go with 5 to 7-inch versions.


Gerald Almy

Heavier line is required, though. Use 6 to 10-pound test for the white bass and largemouths, 12 to 20-pound test for stripers.

Lipless crankbaits (also called vibrators) are another excellent choice for surfacing bass, whites and stripers. The Spot, Rat-L-Trap, Rattlin' Rap, Texas Shad, Sugar Shad and Manniac are some popular brands. Silver or chrome with a black or blue back is the best color, for both this and the thin-minnow plugs. These lures are particularly useful for surfacing fish because you can fish them at any level. If the action seems to be mostly right on top, simply cast them into the melee and reel at a moderate to fast pace. If strikes don't come or the fish slow down with their breaking activity, let the lure sink for 5 to 20 seconds, then reel at a slower pace. Also try reeling back a ways, then stopping to let the lure sink like a wounded shad.

Topwater chuggers are also good lures to have in the tackle box. Thin versions such as the Storm Chug Bug are desirable because they cast long distances, allowing you to stay away from the fish far enough to avoid spooking them, but still get your lure into the heart of the action.

One problem with all of the lures mentioned above, however, is their treble hooks—often double or triple sets of them. In jump fishing, you want to get your lure out, hook a fish, fight it in quickly and get the lure back into the feeding fish again as quickly as possible. You'll lose some time unhooking fish on treble hooked lures, so many anglers choose to use single hook jigs or grubs.

A ¼ to ½-ounce white bucktail jig, preferably with green, yellow or blue saddle hackles tied in along the flanks, is excellent for catching all

*You can potentially find big schools of striped bass (**left and opposite below**) breaking on the surface virtually anywhere on Virginia's big reservoirs, but the lower waters near the dams are often good places to start searching for them. Brown trout (**far left**), on the other hand, seldom feed in large packs. They roam in singles or pairs in Lake Moomaw, rolling on top to take minnows or alewives.*

warmwater fish while jump fishing. You can add a plastic twister tail or pork strip to slow the fall rate and add extra bulk if the baitfish are large. Usually, though, simply the unadorned jig is best, employed with a slow, steady retrieve. A lead-head grub with a plastic twister tail or baitfish type dressing such as the Sassy Shad is another good choice that often works as well as the bucktail jig. With any of these you can unhook fish quickly and be back in action in seconds.

Once fish have stopped breaking on top, you can often extend your action a bit by having a rod rigged with a slab spoon such as a Hopkins Shorty in ¾ ounce. Lower this to 15 to 40 feet, or wherever fish show on your depth finder, then jig it up and down vertically. Raise the rod sharply 12 to 24 inches, then lower the tip just fast enough that it falls freely but no slack forms in the line. Takes will come on the drop and might be seen as just a slight hesita-

tion in the lure's descent, or felt as a slight tap. Set the hooks quickly.

Finding breaking stripers, white bass and largemouths is simply a matter of patience and searching. Check with local marinas, tackle and bait shops and find out if and where any fish have been surfacing lately, then concentrate on that area as a starting point for your search. You can either cut the motor and drift, watching for activity on top, or slowly cruise the most likely waters searching for the fish.

One advantage to cutting the outboard is that you can sometimes hear the fish chomping and popping on the surface. Look for anything different—white water, a splash, spray kicking up, or simply ruffled or choppy-looking water. Sometimes, particularly on larger lakes such as Buggs Island or Gaston, you might see gulls or other birds dipping down to pick up shards of bait and wounded fish, keying you to a surface-feeding binge. Using binoculars can help you locate activity further than you can see with the naked eye, or bring in more sharply what you *think* might be breaking fish.

Gerald Almy

Once you see a school working, fire up the outboard and get toward it as quickly as possible. Slow down a ways from the commotion, ease to within long casting distance of it cautiously, then cut the motor completely. Surfacing fish are skittish because they're out of their usual element, and motoring right up into the melee can shut the feeding down instantly—for you and any other anglers who might have hoped to get in on the action.

When fish go down and stop feeding on top, either let your jig drop deeper or try vertical jigging with a spoon. At the same time, keep a constant eye peeled since they may well break on top again fairly close by in a few minutes or half an hour later.

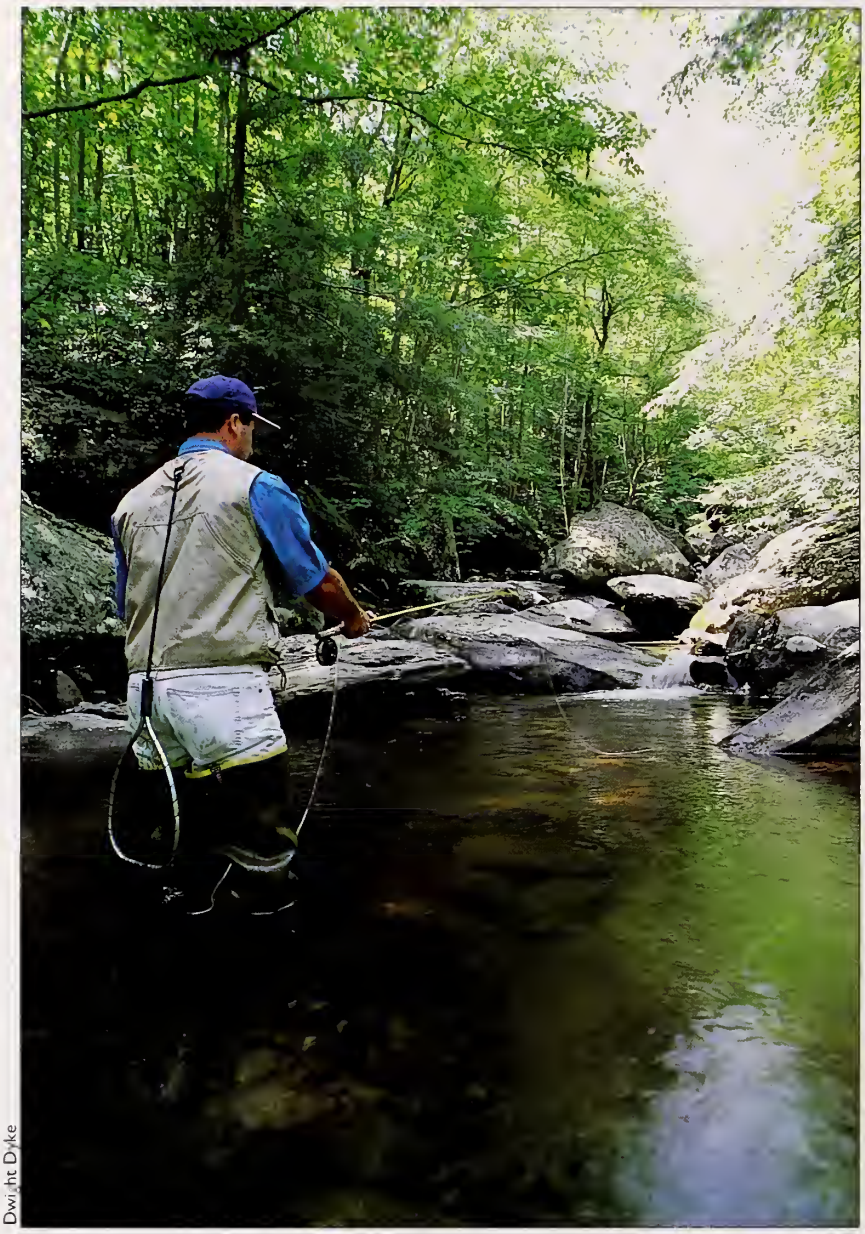
Jump fishing is not something you can do every time out on the water, but if you've prepared for it, chances are you'll rank it as the most dramatic kind of angling you've ever done. □

Gerald Almy has been a full-time outdoor writer for over 17 years. He is currently a hunting and fishing editor on the staff of Sports Afield.

Soc Clay

Reading a Mountain Trout Stream

by Harry Murray



Dwight Dyke

Although very few pools will contain all six potential feeding stations diagrammed ***opposite****, being able to pick out each one present in every pool will increase your odds for success in finding fish.* ***Top:*** *photo by Harry Murray*

Fly-fishing for wild trout is a challenging affair. You may be perfectly equipped with rod, reel, line, and last month's *Virginia Wildlife* selection of 10 terrific trout flies, and still come home troutless. What is the crestfallen angler to do? Plenty. The single most important skill a fly-fisherman should insist upon mastering is that of learning to read a trout stream.

Trout in mountain streams prefer to hold stationary in a pool, allowing the current to bring tasty morsels to them. They select specific "feeding stations" which allow them to get their bellies filled with the least amount of energy. These are the areas the angler must recognize in order to be consistently successful. Factors such as water level, water temperature, insect density and light intensity all influence a trout's selection of a feeding station, and though he does not run down this checklist before sipping in a mayfly, it behooves us to evaluate these feeding stations before plotting our angling strategy.

Let's set up an imaginary pool which contains all six potential feeding areas. Keep in mind that very few pools will contain all six of these, but many will contain several of them. Since the anatomy of the trout dictates that they face into the current for most of their feeding we'll approach our pool from below, fishing upstream so we will not scare them.

The **lip** of the pool is the first feeding station we come to as we work our way upstream from the pool below. This is the furthest downstream spot in the pool where the trout can hold and is usually created by the damming effect of one or more boulders. Trout frequently locate just inches upstream of these boulders and easily rise to sip in any food the stream delivers.

The lip is easy to fish, for we can slip in below it, and staying well hidden, cast a dry fly just above the boulder to pick off our hungry trout. During the first two months of the season when our hatches are at their best, I consider these the primary feeding stations in most pools. This is where the largest trout in a particular pool will be located.

The **tail** of the pool is that portion located just above the lip. It is at its best when the lip is not well formed and the water seems to just percolate out through the rocks at the lower end of the pool. Pinpointing the trout's location here is much more difficult than when he is holding on the lip, because the tail of a pool usually lacks boldly distinctive features which give the trout some break from the current while they feed.

Here, they frequently choose some slight depression in the stream bottom that, although providing them their necessary security, is difficult for us to spot as we scan the pool. For this reason, I usually fish pool tails with several searching casts, covering the water closest to me first. I try to deliver my casts up and across stream at a slight angle so the main part of my leader will not drift over the trout before the fly does (we call this goof "lining" the trout, which can easily scare them).

The **mid-pool** area is located immediately upstream of the tail of the pool. This encompasses the largest portion of the pool, and it's best to summon all the willpower you can when fishing this area.

We all like to make repeated casts and watch our dry flies drift delicately over these long flat sections of the pools. But, this ploy may waste a lot of time if you devote more than two or three casts to covering the entire mid-pool area, for there are few locations here where the trout can feed efficiently.

Seldom will the largest trout hold mid-pool where he is compelled to swim from the bottom of the stream all the way to the surface to sip in a fly and then slide back to the bottom to wait for the next meal. He'll find a more favorable area and leave the mid-pool section for the dinks.

The one exception to this occurs

Mastering the art of reading a trout stream is essential for the serious angler.

when there are no other good feeding stations anywhere else in the pool. Under these circumstances, I study the mid-pool area very carefully in an attempt to find some underwater boulder which could slow the current enough for a good trout to hold in the buffered area just above or beside it to sip in any drifting insects.

Keep in mind that the main reason we are trying to pinpoint a trout's location is so we can drift our flies naturally over their feeding stations—just like a real insect would. Randomly shotgunning casts all about a pool invariably produces unrealistic fly action over trout. This will not only deprive us of the trout's strike, but in dozens of cases, I have actually seen such action spook a trout.

The **head** of the pool is that area receiving the water which tumbles in from the riffle above. There is an abundance of food here, as the nymphs of the aquatic insects nestle among the rocks on the stream bottom. However, the main current flowing through this portion of the pool does not hold many worthy trout, since there are few protected feeding areas here. Rather, trout often hold along the edges of the main flow where this fast current traces a subtle path as it brushes the slow water on each side. From these secure areas they can easily sip in any food the current delivers, while expending only a minimal amount of energy.

Late in the summer when our mountain streams become quite low and clear, prompting trout to be exceedingly wary, these edges of the

A Trout Pool

*As you work your way up a trout stream, you will first look for and work the **lip**, then the **tail**, the **mid-pool**, the **head**, the **back eddy**, and finally the **corner**. Each area should be fished carefully and precisely to deliver fish. Illustration by Pels.*

heads of the pools can be great to fish. The tumbling riffle and gurgling run seems to mask our approach, and trout feed with a degree of comfort they may not be able to conjure up in calmer water.

There are two distinct ways to fish the heads of the pools, and I choose the one which will give me the best chance of getting a drag-free drift with my fly with the least chance of scaring the trout. For example, if the pool is long and fairly uniform in depth, I'll usually move in straight below the side of the incoming riffle I plan to fish and carefully deliver my cast upstream so the line, leader and fly all fall onto currents of the same speed. In this way the fly should drift naturally with the current, and I should raise the trout.

The second ploy I use is at its best if the water just below the incoming riffle is three feet deep or more and is moving at a fast pace. Obviously, I'm more likely to encounter this situation in the spring of the year, but an elevated water level at any time prompts this tactic. I will move into the pool below and on the opposite side of the riffle I plan to fish. Remember, the fish will be looking for their food along the fast water-slow water interface, so it is important to seek a casting position which will permit an accurate fly placement and a realistic drift along this vein. I find this easiest to achieve if I am within 15 feet of the target when I make my cast. Then, by extending my arm and fly rod out over the racing current, I'm in complete control of my drifting fly. No, this won't spook the trout, because the fast current between you and the fish will help mask your approach. (Obviously it would be best if you didn't fall in right here.)

The **back eddy** feeding area of a pool is located on the side of the main flow. It may be best understood if we consider it as a slow-moving, flat-topped whirlpool which is formed by the current pushing back upstream along the bank. It is usually directed by a boulder or shallow gravel bar in the lower portion of the pool, shunting part of the current out away from the main flow.

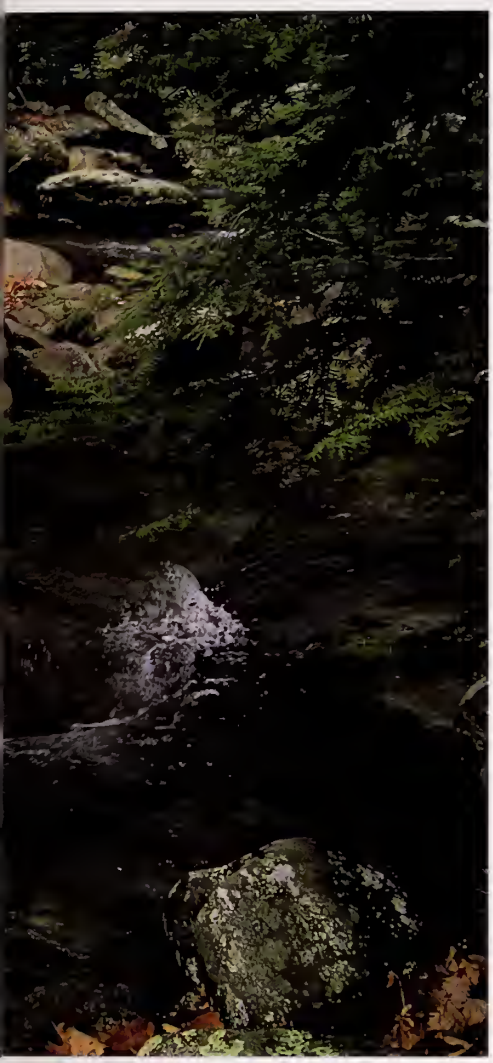
Harry Murray

Back eddies range in size from a foot to 10 feet in diameter, but they all have one thing in common—the fish which feed in them are tough to fool. This is partly because the current here is almost always slower than in the rest of the pool, seemingly giving the trout time to examine our flies with magnifying glasses. (Don't laugh. You'll see.) The slightest drag in our leaders or imperfection in our flies are quickly discerned by the trout who promptly snub our offerings.

Another aspect which heightens the challenge when fishing the back eddies is the fact that these trout are actually facing downstream, thus affording them a clear view of us as we approach the pool from below, unless we take extra precautions.

With all of the problems back eddies present, they just may be my favorite areas to fish. This is because I can frequently spot these fish before I make my casts, or at the very least, I can see their rise forms as they feed on natural insects upon the surface. This one-on-one contest can be either gratifying or humiliating, depending upon its outcome.

Rise forms are easily detected in these back eddies early in the spring when the water is warm enough to encourage the Blue Quill *(Paraleptophlebia adoptiva)* nymphs to emerge from the stream bottom, but the air temperature is still too cool to afford a quick getaway of the adult mayflies. Thus, these lethargic little insects will ride around and around in this lazy Susan-like eddy where the trout can pick them off at their leisure. Since this is one of our heavi-



Fishing a mountain trout stream in Virginia is a challenging occupation. By learning to read the water in each pool, the angler learns more about his or her quarry, its habits, and how to fool the wary, wild trout.

est hatches, one can expect great fishing throughout the entire stream once the action starts.

I also like to fish back eddies early in the fall when we still have an abundance of terrestrial insects along with our fall midges. The low stream flows at this time of the year seldom deliver food to trout at a rate which satisfies them. Thus, they frequently slip into the back eddies and cruise about just inches beneath the surface, picking off every tidbit they can find.

The easiest way I have found to take these cruisers consistently is to actually spot an individual fish and cast my fly about a foot in front of him as he hunts diligently about the back eddy in search of his meal. Obviously, this calls for small flies, gossamer leaders and pinpoint accuracy, all of which place special demands upon the angler. But the reward of outwitting a wise, old cruiser delicately sipping tiny morsels from a mirrored surface is unparalleled.

The **corner** is the last feeding station we normally fish in each pool. This area is not difficult to fish, but often it is difficult for beginning anglers to locate and properly discern its currents. In truth, its diminutive size—often no larger than a dinner plate—can cause it to go undetected by even experienced anglers.

The corner is the furthest upstream portion of the pool along the bank. It is formed as an upstream current turns across the face of a boulder to slide into the main part of the pool. Since this is a reverse flow, similar to the back eddy, this means the trout will actually be facing away from the main part of the pool as they feed on drifting insects.

Before you dismiss this tiny portion of the pool as not worth your time, let me make an important point. At peak feeding periods, if the largest trout in the pool is not on the lip, he'll be in the corner. And often he'll choose the corner in preference to the lip, even if the lip looks perfect to us.

For example, while recently fishing a remote section of a mountain brook trout stream, I came upon one of the most beautiful pools I'd ever seen. It actually contained two perfect lip-feeding stations, formed as a boulder split the exiting stream flow. My excitement at the thought of taking a good trout from each lip was quickly dashed as I failed to raise a trout on either. Sure, I could have spooked both trout, but I had been well hidden, and there was a good water level which should have prevented them from being excessively wary.

As I scanned the pool above, seeking an explanation for my failure, I spotted a tiny teacup-size corner adjacent to a huge boulder at the head of the pool. I really doubted that a worthy trout would choose that small an area as his feeding station. I was wrong! He was the largest brook trout I landed last year.

There are three important aspects to keep in mind as you prepare to fish any corner. Due to the irregular direction of the current, it is necessary to accurately determine this flow, for it is the miniature conveyer which delivers the food to our trout as they face into it. In most cases this will mean a trout will be facing at a right angle to the incoming riffle where it enters the pool—sort of looking back at the bank.

Thus diagnosed, you now know where to cast your fly so it will drift naturally over a waiting trout. However, the main problem confronting the angler with a feeding station this small is that there are many mixed currents rolling all about it, any one of which will grab a leader and quickly pull the fly away from the trout. At the very least, this *drag* will prevent the trout from striking our fly, and I have seen it actually spook a trout, chasing him off his feeding station.

This problem actually can be prevented before it occurs by moving carefully into a casting position which is close enough to the trout so you can actually hold the excessive line and leader off the water by extending your fly rod up and out the instant the cast is delivered. No, you won't spook as many fish as you may suspect at this close range. There is usually a heavy current in the riffle which you can use to mask your approach. And besides, you'll be coming in behind him. (Aren't you glad trout don't have eyes in their tails?)

Learning to read a mountain trout stream will provide you with the solid foundation upon which you can successfully build your angling career. And once you begin this challenging study, you'll be hard-pressed to put your rod and reel away all season long.

Harry Murray is a freelance writer who teaches fishing and fly tying in Edinburg, Virginia.

Limitless Canoe

A guide to becoming independent on the water

by Tom Mosca III
Photographs by Tim Wright

My interest in the water and things wild goes back to my earliest memories. Although I had some experience with canoes over the years, I spent more time on foot in the woods or in larger powerboats and sailboats. However, after my T-9 spinal cord injury in 1984, with attendant functionally complete paraplegia, I found that I couldn't get to very many of the

The wheelchair angler need not be deterred from his or her sport, nor from the freedom of spur-of-the-moment canoeing either alone or tandem. The author has developed a safe and reliable way of regaining some mobility and freedom to practice his sport.

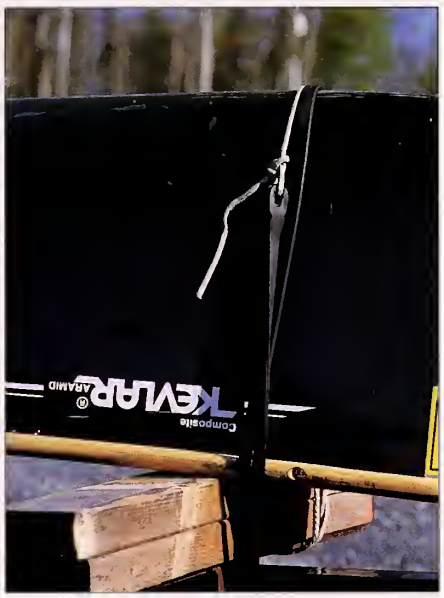
wild places I loved, and had to find new ways to do the things I wanted to do. Most boats could be boarded somehow, but getting into a boat on a trailer was a terrific effort, and boarding from a dock without assistance was dangerous.

Being basically unwilling to ask for help every time I wanted to go out on the water, I had to find a new way. When I rediscovered canoes, it was the beginning of a new freedom in wilderness access. Here was a form of locomotion which permitted me to move around with independence, and to get back into woodland settings that had been out of reach.

I found that a person in good physical shape who desires to canoe should not be deterred by paraplegia. Motivation tempered with good common sense, a little thought, and a lot of effort prevails in this, as well as in almost all other endeavors. Plus, classes in canoeing are available from many county and city parks and recreation departments, and students with disabilities are welcomed.

Paddling narrow, free-flowing streams can take one into some of the most remote country in Virginia. Canoes provide access to salt marshes which are unapproachable by wheelchair, and permit exploring lake shores where there are no roads. On one trip on the Tye River, I recall meeting a nesting pair of Canada geese. They were comfortably sitting in their huge nest on a downed tree over the water, and I was able to pass within arm's reach of them and leave without causing alarm. On another trip on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River, I saw as many wood ducks in one day as I had previously seen in a year. Eagles, ospreys, and other large birds of prey are a common occurrence, and this year I've observed mating behavior in red-tailed hawks several times.

There are many trips I wouldn't take without a companion, but that has nothing to do with my wheelchair; it is just good sense to travel with a friend sometimes, particularly if white-water streams are on the agenda. There are other places where I can't launch and retrieve without a friend, such as many boat landings, but by supplying a tandem boat and the enthusiasm to go, I put as much into the partnership as I get from it. That makes it righteous.

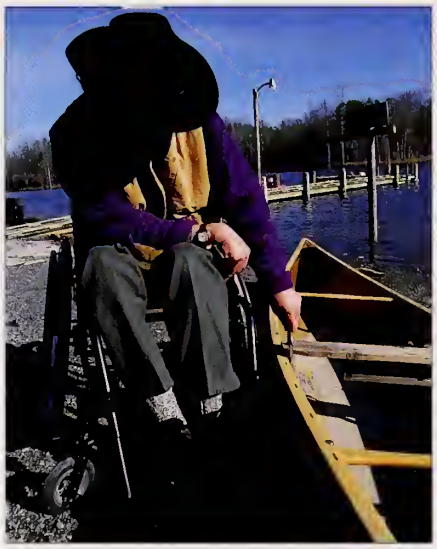


Although car-topping a canoe singlehandedly works, a small trailer greatly reduces the effort required, and makes the whole enterprise more enjoyable.

A combination of ropes and rubber bungee cords secures the boat. The bungees serve two purposes, they keep constant tension on the tie-downs without fear of them loosening, and they are quick to attach and detach. The black rubber type is good because ultraviolet damage is evidenced by surface cracking, and the steel hook can be removed.

By tying the rope directly to the bungee, the danger of damage to the boat hull is significantly reduced. Using two tie-downs at each end lessens the danger of losing the boat in the event of a bungee failure.

Some form of cushion between wood gunnels and carrying frame is necessary. I like foam gunnel blocks, available from catalogs or canoe stores. Alternatively, the support frames could be wrapped in foam pipe insulation or exterior carpet.



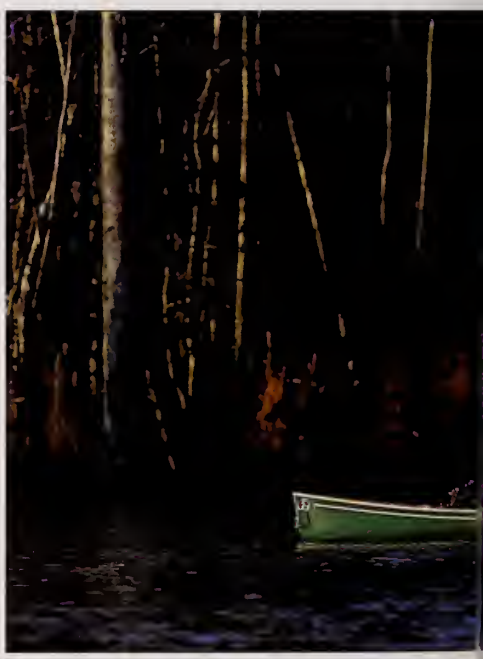
With my paraplegia, I'm uncomfortable sitting on canoe seats. While a person with a lower injury may find them acceptable, the height above the water line makes me unstable. Also, the clip-on back rests I've tried are flimsy and don't give enough support. For these reasons, I prefer to sit on the bottom, and use a backrest.

This rest I use is easily constructed, as you can see. Materials are: (1) 1" x 4" x 36" board (tailor the length to your boat width), (1) 2" x 4" x 12" board, (2) 2" steel angle braces, woodscrews, a piece of 1" closed cell foam and some waterproof rubber cement. In addition to the angle braces, wood screws through the 1" x 4" into the 2" x 4" add additional strength. A C-clamp at each end secures the rest to the gunwales of the canoe. Notice that 3.5 inches of height adjustment is available by turning the rest upside down. In place of a seat, use an old wheelchair cushion wrapped in plastic, or closed-cell foam sufficient to serve the same purpose.

Now, while the boat is next to the truck, this is as good a time as any to load equipment. I carry a dissembled sawhorse for reasons to be revealed shortly. Don't forget your lifejacket!

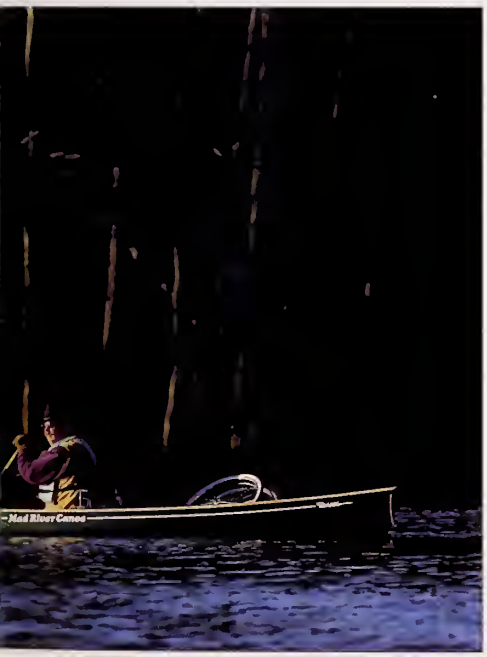
Make sure the canoe is downhill to the water, so sliding it into the water is not difficult. On the other hand, some public boat ramps are too steep, making it very difficult to stop a wheelchair on them. Boat ramps are often slick too, so beware of sliding into the drink.

Getting as much of the canoe as possible into the water saves considerable wear and tear on its bottom, because the water will be supporting its weight as the boat slides offshore. If there is room to slide forward after getting in, this will also help. Next, a nifty piece of adaptive equipment is used to launch. Two 1.5" x 36" hardwood dowels are used in the manner of ski poles to push off from shore.



As a hobby, canoeing is worthy in its own right, and can be combined with other activities such as nature photography, bird watching and fishing. At the same time, the exercise provides a good upper

It is very important to properly adjust trim in a canoe. Neutral trim, with the boat level in the water, is usually satisfactory. Most trim adjustment is made by cargo placement, particularly the wheelchair. In a solo boat, the paddler sits near the center, and shifts position to fine-tune trim. This will involve moving the backrest. If a long leg of a trip is directly up or downwind, adjusting trim so the downwind end of the canoe is slightly higher will cause the boat to "weathervane," often saving considerable effort. Most tandem (two-seat) canoes paddle well as solo boats. It helps to remove the center thwart, but if the canoe is a rental, it may be necessary to sit aft of the thwart and balance the boat by moving cargo forward.



body workout. For me though, the greatest benefit is the considerable satisfaction, peace of mind, and sense of self-determination that comes from being in nature and in command of a small craft.

Designed Specially For You

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is committed to making it easy, comfortable, and safe for boaters and anglers with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors. Currently, we maintain 72 boat landings across the state which provide handicapped parking and clear access routes to the shoreline edge of piers adjacent to ramps. In addition, we have constructed 17 handicapped fishing piers at public lakes throughout Virginia which are fully accessible to wheelchairs.

You can obtain a list of these special facilities and their locations by writing to: Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Information Office, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104, or by calling 804/367-1000.

On return, it's time to employ the ski pole trick again. It's a little more difficult going uphill, but it works. However, moving from canoe to wheelchair is tricky. It's a long reach from a canoe up to a wheelchair seat, the boat is unstable on land and difficult to hold, and the slope of the terrain compounds the problem. This is where a collapsible sawhorse helps. Assembled from its component parts and erected over the chair and canoe, it provides a stable bar upon which to lift yourself.

Tom Mosca III lives in Gloucester. He wrote this article hoping to encourage other folks in wheelchairs to experience the outdoors and gain more independence in their lives.

Bluegill; photo by M.L. Giovannetti

KEEPER

Forty tips for pa
that will guarantee a se

by Gerald Almy

No fish are more appealing to go after as summer settles in than panfish. Unlike bass, trout and stripers, which can sometimes be difficult if not impossible to catch, species like crappies, rockbass, bluegills and white bass are almost always willing to nab a lure, fly or bait. They are made to order for those days when you want to take it easy, kick your feet back and enjoy the experience of being out on a lake or river without working at fishing—and still come home with a cooler full of fish.

That's one of the strongest elements of appeal fishing for these species offer. They are *reliable*. If you carefully pick the waters you visit and use proven techniques, you know you're going to land at least some fish to make the day a success.

To help you enjoy this bountiful resource found in Virginia's lakes, rivers, streams and ponds, try these 40 tips for catching more panfish.

1 White and chartreuse jigs are top offerings for white bass in 1/8 to 1/4 ounce sizes—both hair and plastic tail versions. Try a variety of retrieves, starting with slow, steady reeling. If that doesn't produce, pause partway back and let the lure drop for a few seconds like a wounded shad. For a third approach, try reeling a few feet, then twitching, reeling then twitching.

2 One of the top places to find crappies in summer is around bridge pilings. These concrete spans offer shade and structure for the fish to ambush baitfish that swim past. Work the pilings closest

to land first, then probe those out in deeper water until you locate a school. Fish jigs or minnows, working lower levels as you move out from shore toward the creek or river channel dropoff.

3 Use fine wire gold aberdeen hooks when bait fishing for crappie. Best sizes are 2, 1 or 1/0, depending on the size fish you're going after. Fine wire hooks penetrate readily into a crappie's mouth and hold up during the fight, but will bend free when you hang up on brush or logs. This saves expense and time retying fresh hooks, because you'll often find these fish right next to blowdowns and brushpiles. Simply bend the hook back to its original shape with your fingers or pliers after unsnagging it.

4 If you miss the first bluegill spawn, which occurs this month, don't worry. These fish often return to the shallows to breed a second or even third time in June and July. Look for them in 1-4 feet of water over beds during the full moon.

5 One of the best ways to catch mating redear sunfish is to pole or use an electric motor to ease quietly through shallow water searching for the oval beds the fish breed in. Sandy bottoms are best. If you see fish and they swim off, either make a note of the location and return later, or simply anchor a short casting distance away and wait. The fish will return soon. Toss an earthworm or red wriggler on a size 6 or 8 long shank hook with a split shot and small bobber on the line so the bait lands right in the bed. Strikes should be instantaneous!

6 After they spawn in feeders and tributaries, white bass move back down to the main lake and school up in moderate to deep water. Search for these fish around sunken islands, river channel edges, humps, deep points and junctures of creek channels. Find the structure on your topo map first, then on the lake with a depth finder. Vertically jig a ¼ to ½-ounce slab spoon, blade lure, or small lipless crankbait over the area if fish appear on the sonar. Or, try casting and retrieving jigs or drifting with live shiners.

7 Sponge rubber spiders are one of the top fly rod offerings for bluegills. But, often the legs are tied too long. This makes them tangle on the hook and encourages fish to grab the legs without getting the body and hook in their mouths. If the legs are more than ⅓-inch long, trim them back to that length with scissors. They won't tangle and you'll draw more solid hookups.

8 If fish aren't feeding on top, try adding a split shot or two, 12-18 inches up the leader when using a sponge rubber spider, and working it deeper. Let the spider sink, then retrieve with a slow hand-twisting motion. Soaking the fly in a fish scent also helps with this slow, subsurface presentation.

9 A good way to take crappies and white bass is fishing at night under lights. Set out as many lanterns or lights as you can and wait for the illumination to attract insects and small baitfish. These will lure in a variety of panfish. Spinners, spinner/jig combos, plastic-tailed grubs and live minnows will all draw strikes once the fish move into the lights, which might take an hour or two.

Dwight Dyke

Use thin-diameter lines for bluegill fishing. Four-pound line is a good standard, but don't hesitate to drop down to 2-pound test if the water is especially clear and fish are skittish.

10 Trout fishermen have long known the appeal of terrestrials, but flies imitating these land-based insects are also great for panfish. Use ant, beetle, inchworm, cricket and grasshopper imitations in sizes 8 to 16 for bluegills, redbreasts, redears and crappies when they're feeding in shallow water near shore.

11 A good way to produce double hookups on white bass is to have one person keep a jig or streamer ready while the other

angler in the boat hooks a fish and works it close to the boat. As the white bass struggles, the second person should cast as close to the commotion as possible. These are schooling fish and often there will be other bass swimming close to the hooked one that will grab the second lure when when it's retrieved past them.

12 If the lakes you fish in are clean-looking with little in the way of brushpiles or flooded timber, consider making your own panfish habitat. Gather up some small trees or build a stake bed out of old wooden crates and plant the structure on the bottom of a lake with cinder blocks or rocks and wire. Anchor the cover in 10-30 feet of water near shallows where fish spawn in spring. Mark the spot by using triangulation with points on land. After a few weeks, fish should start using the cover—primarily crappies, but also bluegills, bass and catfish.

13 Mini-crankbaits in silver or shad finish that dive 8 to 15 feet are great searching lures for white bass. Use these on points, bars, humps, dropoffs and the upper sections of lakes just after the spring spawning run. You can also watch for swirling fish or search for schools on your sonar to cast the small silver crankbaits to.

14 When fishing lakes, try these spots for panfish: inlets, outlets, points, coves, weedbeds, areas with fallen trees or brush, underwater humps, springs, rockpiles, flats and dropoffs.

15 When white bass are hard to locate, try trolling. This allows you to present the fish with several lure choices at once and probe a variety of depths. Top lure choices include jigs of ⅛ to ½-ounce, silver spoons, small crankbaits, diving thin-minnow plugs, lipless crankbaits, and jig/spinner combos. Motor slowly through areas where humps rise up off the lake floor and over points, dropoffs and creek mouths in depths of 8 to 30 feet.

16 One of the best baits for yellow perch is a live minnow. If you don't have minnows or run out of them, try this trick. Cut a thin tapered strip of white belly meat from one of the fish you've already caught. It should be ¼ to ½-inch wide at the end and taper for 1 to 2

Gerald Almy

inches to a thin tip. This offering also works on crappies, bluegills and pickerel.

17 To double up your chances on bluegills while fly fishing, try this rig. First, tie on a small cork popper, then attach an 18-inch 2 to 4-pound tippet to the eyelet of the popper. Add a small Black Gnat, ant or some other wet fly or nymph to the end of that. The popper will create surface commotion and attract fish, while the dropper seduces 'gills that don't want to strike the surface bug. Double hookups are not unusual with this rig.

18 Always wear a hat with a brim and polarized sunglasses when fishing for bluegills in spring. You can often spot spawning beds in the shallow water, or fish searching for food with the hat and glasses shielding your eyes and cutting the sun's glare off the water. If you wear eyeglasses, have a prescription pair of Polaroids made.

19 Use thin-diameter lines for bluegill fishing, preferably with a clear finish. Four-pound line is a good standard, but don't hesitate to drop down to 2-pound test if the water is especially clear and fish are skittish.

20 The redbreast sunfish is a great panfish quarry, especially when caught in flowing water. Concentrate on slow portions of pools, eddies and undercut banks, rather than riffles and rapids. Redbreasts like small spinners, spinnerbaits, curly-tail grubs and tiny crankbaits. Baits such as worms and crickets are also productive. Flies that score include poppers, small nymphs and streamers such as the Woolly Bugger.

21 If action is slow, try slapping the water with your paddle. It may seem outlandish, but the commotion sounds like feeding fish and at times will attract nearby crappies, bluegills and white bass to your offerings.

Gerald Almy

Top left: *Small jigs for crappie fishing.* ***Above:*** *Rock bass—they love to hang out close to the shoreline on piedmont and mountain streams and river.* ***Opposite:*** *Crickets are a productive bait for redbreast sunfish. Concentrate on slow portions of pools, eddies, and undercut banks, rather than riffles and rapids.*

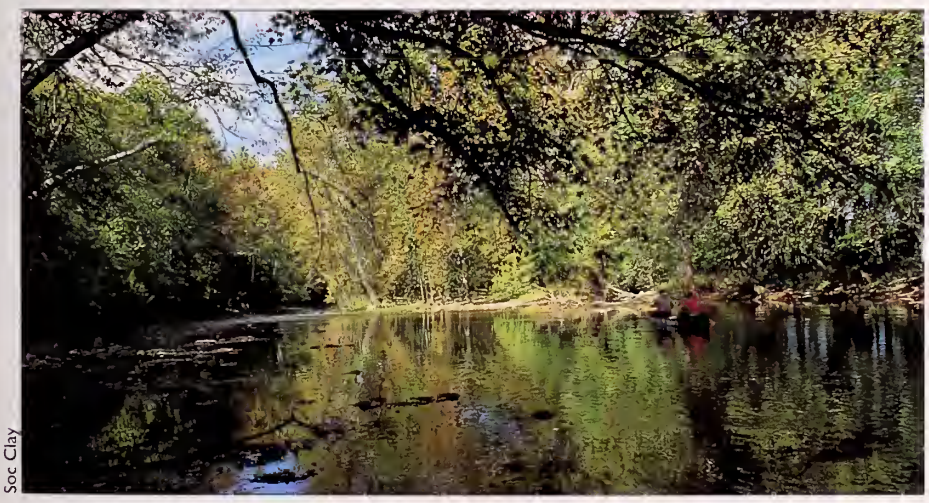
22 Try chumming if fishing is slow. Keep eggshells from your breakfast, crumple them up and sprinkle overboard. The slowly descending fragments will flutter through the water and draw in both baitfish and panfish such as crappie, bluegills and yellow perch.

23 Hook panfish on a stringer through their bottom lip or both lips—never through the gills. If it's hot, attach two stringers together so the fish can swim deeper in cooler water.

24 Light rods are best for panfish, with most of the bend or flex concentrated in the tip. A slightly limber tip keeps bluegills from ejecting the lure as quickly when they feel the tension from the rod and line.

Gerald Almy

M. L. Giovannetti


Soc Clay

25 Shellcracker is another name for the redear sunfish. This nickname comes from the panfish's fondness for eating mollusks, particularly snails. Look for these fish around submerged stumps where they root for the mollusks. Best bait is a red wriggler or garden worm on a size 6 or 8 long-shank hook. In the spring, redears can also be taken on flies and soft-plastic grubs.

26 Avoid stocking crappies in farm ponds. Instead, stick to bluegills and bass, as well as minnow species such as the fathead. Crappies spawn before bass and their young of the year will be too large to be eaten by bass young of the year. The result will be small bass and an overpopulation of crappies with stunted growth rates.

27 Most people fish for crappies with spinning outfits, but a fly rod and reel spooled with 4 to 8 pound monofilament is also a good choice. You can swing casts out to brushy cover or drop jigs next to bridge pilings with this long rod and stay further back from the cover, thus reducing the likelihood of spooking fish.

28 White bass mostly feed in deep open waters during the day in summer, but sometimes they'll move into the shallows late in the evening and early in the morning for a feeding spree. Watch for their surface slashes near bars, islands, flats, and banks close to deep water, then cast a small white jig, topwater lure or vibrator towards the swirls.

29 When fishing poppers on a fly rod for bluegills and redears, try not to move the bug after it first touches the water. Wait, 10, better still 20, seconds before nudging it slightly. The longer you wait, the more likely strikes will come as the bug sits there motionless. The popper looks like an insect that has fallen stunned to the water and is unable to move.

30 A top lure for bluegills is a leadhead grub with a short stubby plastic body. Fish it slowly—just fast enough to keep it off the bottom. Partway back pause briefly to draw strikes from trailing fish. Use 1/32 to 1/8-ounce versions in brown, black, green, red, smoke and purple.

31 Panfish can be caught in open water (particularly white bass), but most of these fish orient to structure. Look for dock pilings, submerged timber, islands, bridges, weed beds, trees leaning into the lake or river, points and rock piles.

32 The top two baits for bluegills and shellcrackers are worms and crickets. Both will catch each of these species, but bluegills show a slight preference for crickets while redears seem to favor worms. Use a size 6 to 10 long-shank bait hook, tiny split shot and slender float with both offerings. This is a great setup for fishing with kids.

33 In spring, crappies strike large minnows readily. They're hungry from the winter and

that's the only size forage usually available. Once summer settles in, however, young baitfish become abundant; small minnows in the 1 to 2-inch class will usually produce more strikes then.

34 Rice and corn both make good chum for carp. Boil the rice or use canned corn. Dump it in a likely area where carp are found. Then come back a few hours later or the next day and fish with several kernels of corn on a gold hook or a flavored doughball for bait.

35 Jigs can be cast and retrieved for panfish by themselves, but sometimes it pays to attach a bobber. That way you can adjust the float so the jig suspends at any level you think fish are holding. You can also fish the lure slower this way, jiggling it and twitching it without fear of hanging up. When the bobber dips down or you feel a tap, set the hook immediately.

36 Rock bass love to hang out close to the shoreline on piedmont and mountain streams and rivers. Cast as close as possible to the bank with small spinners, jigs, crankbaits and minnows to take these spunky panfish. Concentrate on areas with rocks, brush, overhanging trees or undercut banks.

37 Tiny spinnerbaits are great lures for mixed bag fishing on rivers and streams. Choose models with black, crayfish or chartreuse bodies. Work the lure back slowly and steadily near the bottom in pools, eddies and pocket water to take a mixture of bluegills, rockbass, redbreasts, crappies and maybe even a bass or pickerel.

38 For yellow perch fishing, rig a dipsey sinker of ½ to 1-ounce with two size 4 to 6 dropper hooks positioned 12 and 24 inches above it baited with small live minnows. Cast and retrieve this rig from shore or drift near weedbeds, rocks and dropoffs in a boat. When you catch a fish, toss out a marker buoy and probe that area thoroughly for these schooling panfish.

Crappies; photo by Soc Clay

39 When searching for spawning bluegills, look to coves in lakes and quiet backwaters and eddies in rivers. If you can find sandy or gravel bottom, chances are even better for finding mating fish. Look for saucer-shaped beds and fish hovering over them, then use grubs, earthworms or sponge rubber spiders to take the nest-guarding fish.

40 Try to time your fishing trips for periods just before a front blows in. Panfish of all species tend to feed avidly during the few hours before a storm system or weather change moves in. Just be sure to get off the water before lightning or high winds arrive. □

Gerald Almy has been a full-time outdoor writer for over 17 years. He is currently a hunting and fishing editor on the staff of Sports Afield.

Preserving in bronze what we're treasure in the wild

A Special Wildlife Series by Turner Sculpture

Northern flying squirrel (height: 7 inches) by David Turner.

Going, Going.....(Almost) Gone

Less than 50 of the 200 piping plovers and 200 northern flying squirrels sculpted by David Turner of Turner Sculpture to support Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species Program are left for sale! Soon, it will be too late to purchase one of these exquisite bronze sculptures of two of Virginia's rarest animals.

David Turner has captured the spirit of the delicate, yet spritely piping plover and her chicks in bronze, a fitting reminder of the fact that one-quarter of the East Coast piping plover population nests on the beaches of Virginia's barrier islands. Conversely, the model for his charming northern flying squirrel hails from only three locations high in Virginia's mountains.

You can help Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species Program by purchasing these works of art. The money raised from the sale of these sculptures will provide the program responsible for the management and protection of all the Commonwealth's rare wildlife with over 1/10th of its operating budget.

Each sculpture has a purchase price of $325. Turner Sculpture will receive $175 to cover their production costs, while the remaining $150 will be sent to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as your contribution to Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species Program. A tax advisor should be consulted regarding the personal tax deductibility of your contribution. Each piece sold will include a certificate of origin and a letter confirming your contribution to the future of Virginia's wildlife.

You may order either the piping plover or the Northern flying squirrel by sending a $325 check for each signed and numbered sculpture to: Turner Sculpture, Box 128, Onley, Va 23418. For credit card orders, call: 804/787-2818.

And don't forget to give a little bit back to Virginia's wildlife by contributing to Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species Program. The program receives no state tax dollars. See the gray card in this magazine for details.

Photo of piping plover approximates actual size.

TURNER SCULPTURE

Nongame and Endangered WILDLIFE · PROGRAM
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

Rural Sportsman, Remington Establish Wildlife Stewardship Farm™ Awards

Two leaders in the outdoors industry have teamed to recognize the contributions of private landowners to the future of hunting and fishing. Remington Arms Co. and *Progressive Farmer*/Rural Sportsman magazine announce the Wildlife Stewardship Farm™ Awards Program to identify farms where lands and lakes are managed to benefit wildlife and made available for public use.

A "Farm of the Year" will be honored for exemplary wildlife and habitat management in each of four categories: Upland Game, Waterfowl, Big Game, and Farm Pond. Any farm or ranch in the U.S. that allows hunting or fishing by the public on some basis, either commercially or otherwise, may be entered.

Rural Sportsman editor J. Wayne Fears points out that in 1994, an estimated 66 percent of wildlife habitat was privately owned, with 80 percent of the wildlife found on that 66 percent. Also, private lands are home to an estimated 2.5 million ponds. In 1991, 10.6 million anglers fished on private ponds measuring 10 acres or smaller.

"The farmer has long been the unsung hero in the field of wildlife management," said Fears. "Many landowners and leaseholders serve as wildlife stewards and work hard to pass on these renewable resources to future generations. It's time they received the recognition they deserve."

Eligible entrants will be the actual stewards of the lands, those responsible for planning and implementing management practices whether or not they own the land. A farm or ranch may be entered into one or more categories.

To enter the awards program, the steward must complete an entry form provided by Rural Sportsman and submit photographs that illustrate the management practices. Entries must be received by Rural Sportsman no later than July 1, 1995.

Winners in each category will receive Remington products, a plaque, a farm sign, and an expenses-paid trip for two to Birmingham, Alabama for an awards presentation.

"*Progressive Farmer*/Rural Sportsman is proud to be partners with America's oldest firearms manufacturer in recognizing the role of the stewards of the land in the past and future of hunting and fishing," said Fears. For many years, Remington has supported wildlife conservation and management efforts, including a major role in creating the Wildlife Management Institute. The company also supports the fund-raising efforts of such conservation groups as the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Waterfowl USA, and others.

"For 109 years, *Progressive Farmer* has informed the rural landowner on the wise management of wildlife resources," Fears continued. "Since its inception, that has been the primary role of the Rural Sportsman section of *Progressive Farmer*. We think the partnership with Remington on the Wildlife Stewardship Farm Awards Program is a natural fit with an organization whose goals are similar to ours."

To request further information and entry forms, write to Farm Awards, P. O. Box 157, Heflin, AL 36264, or fax 205-463-4616. □

1995 Fishing Guide Available—Free!

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' 1995 Freshwater Fishing Guide is hot off the press! It's chockful of information on the public lakes, streams, and rivers in the state, with specific details on how to get to the state's hottest fishing holes, the facilities available once you get there, and essential phone numbers. Our fisheries biologists give you best bets for the season by region, information on Virginia's growing urban fishing program, trout fishing information, and detailed notes for the season on dozens of the state's best fishing waters.

This 32-page guide is without a doubt the one publication you will want to keep in your tackle box all season long!

Write to us for your free copy: Virginia Fishing Guide, VDGIF, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. □

Wildlife Habitat is an Award Winner

The third largest flower and garden show in the nation recognized a wildlife habitat exhibit produced by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) as the Most Environmental and Ecologically Educational Exhibit of the show and as the second best exhibit on display.

The 1995 Maymont Flower and Garden Show in Richmond hosted over 28,000 people this year at the annual event which draws exhibitors from all over Virginia and the nation. The VDGIF/VDOF exhibit highlighted plantings which can be used in the home landscape to encourage wildlife in your area. While other exhibitors in the show spent as much as $20,000 on their exhibits, the VDGIF/VDOF exhibit cost only about $600. It just proves that gardening for wildlife can be cheap as well as beautiful! □

Buy a Fishing License—Get a Free Poster!

Now, listen up all you couch potatoes. We know you would really like to take up fishing this season, and we're going to help you do it. For first-time anglers, we're offering a free, full-color poster of Virginia's freshwater game fish if you send us a xeroxed copy of your fishing license purchased during National Fishing Week June 5-11.

This offer is good for first-time license buyers only, 'cause we want to start you off right in a sport that will hook you on the outdoors for life!

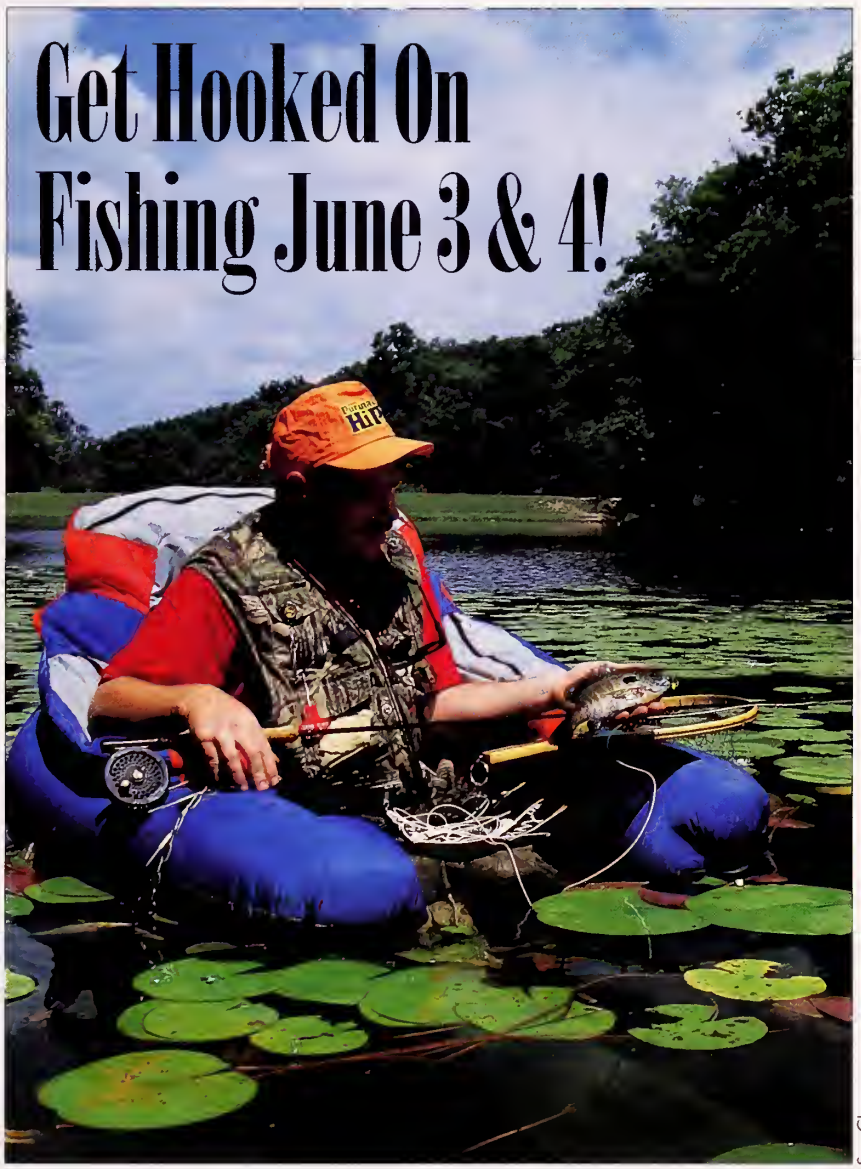
For your free poster, send a xeroxed copy of your first-ever fishing license (remember, it must be purchased between June 5 and 11 to qualify) to: Free Fish Poster Offer, VDGIF, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104.

1995 Sporting Clays Classic—Saturday, May 20

The 2nd Annual Sporting Clays Classic will be held on Saturday, May 20 at Maryland's Prince George's County Trap & Skeet Center, just 16 miles outside of Washington, D.C. Last year, the event netted $20,000 for the American Diabetes Association, the nation's leading voluntary health organization committed to helping cure diabetes and preventing new cases through research, education, and advocacy.

This year, a 50-bird sporting clays round will be featured (teams of 4) with prizes awarded to 3 places in 3 Lewis classes, as well as to HOA and HOA Ladies guns. A two-man flush and five stand is also on the schedule, with prizes awarded to 3 places in each event.

Beretta and the National Rifle Association are lead sponsors for this year's event, and once more the proceeds will beenefit the American Diabetes Association. Entry fees are $250 for individual shooters and $800 for 4-person teams. Deadline for entries is May 15. For more information, contact Betty Digges (202/331-8303) or Diane Flatt (703/836-4792) at the American Diabetes Association, Attn. Sporting Clays Classic, 1211 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20036. □



No License Required!

Enjoy a weekend of sun, fun, and fishing—on us!
It's the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries'

Free Fishing Days!

On Saturday and Sunday, June 3 & 4, you won't need a fishing license to fish (except on designated trout waters).
So, get your tackle ready and pack up your lifejacket. Head for the waters of the state, and get hooked on fishing—for life! □

Habitat

by Nancy Hugo

Black Locust

If you're walking outdoors this month and happen to find yourself engulfed by a honey-scented fragrance with no identifiable source, look up. High in the branches of what looks like a half-dead tree you'll find the cream-colored blossoms of the black locust.

How incongruous these drooping clusters of wisteria-like blooms look in these ramshackled trees! Even the fresh, feathery foliage of the black locust seems out of keeping with the tree's deeply furrowed bark and tumbledown look. More than once I've heard the new owner of an old homeplace say he or she was planning to remove these unkempt trees, but to my eye the contrast between the black locust's partially-dead, thorny branches and its dripping clusters of sweet May flowers is part of its charm.

Black locusts are also dripping in history. Although they originally grew no farther east than the Appalachians, they've naturalized all over the country. Virginia Indians were the first to spread them east; they planted them for their strong wood which they used to make bows. Jamestown colonists used black locust logs as cornerposts for their first homes, and a hundred years later, the British naturalist Mark Catesby reported these durable posts were "yet standing" and "still perfectly sound."

Black locust seedlings were sent to Europe in the early seventeenth century by the French herbalist Jean Robin from whom the tree takes its botanical name Robinia. According to naturalist Donald Peattie, toward the end of the 18th century, this tree became all the rage in Europe, and by the first part of the 19th century, although they were selling millions of plants grown from American seeds, London nurseries couldn't keep up with demand. Tree farmers in this country were also growing black locust; their intended market was the British Navy to whom they hoped to supply treenails. According to Peattie, nails made of locust wood were "stronger than the strongest hulls, and far longer lived." In fact, he reports that the British gave the superiority of locust wood in the U.S. ships as one of the excuses for their defeat on Lake Champlain in the War of 1812.

From what I've read, if the folks calling Andrew Jackson Old Hickory had really wanted to testify to his toughness, they'd have called him Old Locust. Peattie (whose *A Natural History of Trees* is a must read for anyone who wants to learn more about trees) reports that locust is the stiffest of our woods, exceeding hickory by 40 percent. It's also the most durable of hardwoods: "Taking White Oak as standard of 100 percent, Black Locust has durability of 250 percent," writes Peattie. Its fuel value is also higher than either hickory or oak. According to Peattie, a cord of black locust at 20 percent moisture content has almost as much fuel value as a ton of anthracite coal!

Black locust; photo by Hal Horwitz

But before you turn your backyard locust into firewood, treenails, or fenceposts, consider the tree's other assets. Bees make a delicious honey from its flowers, and quail, other birds, and squirrels eat the tree's ¼" bean-like seeds, which are held in 3-4" pea-like pods that break open in the winter and fly long distances. The trees, which have extensive root systems and will send up sprouts all over the place, are good for erosion control and for mine site reclamation. A legume, the black locust fixes nitrogen in the soil, and its pinnately compound leaves are interesting to watch because they fold up and "go to sleep" at night.

As landscape trees, locusts are easy to transplant, grow fast, and bloom young. They'll grow just about anywhere except in a swamp. The biggest problem with using black locusts as ornamentals (aside from their half-dead look which I hope I've convinced you is charming) is that leaf miners often reduce their leaves to skeletons. The trees usually recover, but the problem is neither pretty nor easily remedied. A well-fertilized lawn tree is less vulnerable than a woodland tree.

One of the best reasons for growing black locusts around an old homeplace, however, is that it's traditional. According to Dick Anderson, a lightning rod salesman and owner of an historic home surrounded by black locusts, colonists believed black locust trees protected their homes from lightning. Anderson has no scientific explanation, but he says lightning has hit the locusts on his farm many times, and he thinks there's some truth to the old wives' tale.

Whether they function as lightning rods or not, old locusts suit old homeplaces like old brick, so don't cut them down. After all, even a half-dead locust is still half-alive. □

By Joan Cone

For Juicier Fillets—The Microwave Excels!

Super-fast cooking lets your microwave produce ambrosial flounder fillets. Begin by *not* scaling your flounder. Simply lay the white side down and fillet. Cut directly down middle from head to tail to middle of spine. Then use a sharp knife to slip along backbone from center to each edge, slicing through just before the long fins which run head to tail. Turn over and repeat on thinner white side. Take all four fillets, lay skin side down and slide knife between skin and flesh from either end, pressing down on skin as you go. The result is four skinless, boneless, finless fillets ready to transform into a delicious, mouth-watering dish.

When preparing fish fillets in the microwave oven, arrangement has a lot to do with uniformity of the cooking process:

1. Fish fillets should be of uniform thickness.

2. It is best to place thicker pieces along the outer edge of the baking dish, since they will take longer to cook.

MENU

Alison's Curry Dip
Fillet Of Flounder With Mushrooms (For Microwave)
Potato Medley
Creamy Yogurt Coleslaw
Oven Bag Sticky Buns

Alison's Curry Dip

¾ cup mayonnaise
1½ tablespoons ketchup
1½ tablespoons honey
1½ tablespoons grated onion
1½ teaspoons lemon juice
1½ teaspoons curry powder

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Refrigerate for at least 2 to 3 hours before serving. Serve with raw vegetables.

Fillet of Flounder with Mushrooms (For Microwave)

1½ pounds of flounder fillets, fresh or frozen
4 tablespoons butter or margarine
½ pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
½ cup white table wine
Salt to taste
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

Thaw fish if frozen. Place butter in an oblong baking dish and microwave on HIGH power for 2 minutes or until melted. Spread mushrooms over melted butter. Cover mushrooms with fillets and pour wine over all. Cover with waxed paper and microwave on HIGH power for 5 to 7 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Remove fish to a warmed platter and salt to taste. Add Worcestershire sauce to mushroom liquid in dish and stir. Pour over fish and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Potato Medley

¼ cup vegetable oil
3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon grated orange rind
1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
½ teaspoon mustard seed
½ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
4 new potatoes, sliced ¼ inch thick
3 carrots, scraped and thinly sliced
2 cups water
2 zucchini, sliced ½ inch thick
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives

Place oil, vinegar, orange rind, Dijon, mustard seed, salt and pepper in food processor and process until well blended. Set aside. Combine potatoes, carrots and water in a saucepan; bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat and simmer 3 minutes. Add zucchini, cover and cook 3 minutes. Drain. Combine vegetables, dressing and herbs, stirring to coat. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

Creamy Yogurt Coleslaw

3 tablespoons plain low-fat yogurt
2 tablespoons sour cream
¾ teaspoon prepared yellow mustard
½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon cider vinegar
¼ teaspoon celery seeds
Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups coarsely shredded cabbage

In a medium-sized bowl, combine all ingredients except cabbage. Add the cabbage and toss well to mix. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours, tossing occasionally. Serves 4.

Oven Bag Sticky Buns

1 tablespoon flour
1 regular size (10" x 16") Oven Cooking Bag
⅔ cup packed brown sugar
½ cup chopped pecans
6 tablespoons margarine or butter, softened
3 tablespoons orange juice
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 can (12 ounces) refrigerated big buttermilk biscuits

Preheat oven to 375°. Shake flour in Oven Cooking Bag and place in a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan. Add brown sugar, pecans, margarine, orange juice and cinnamon. Squeeze bag to blend ingredients. Smooth mixture in bag into an even layer. Using wooden spoon or spatula, place biscuits on top of sugar mixture in bag. Close bag with nylon tie; cut 6 half-inch slits in neck of bag below tie. Bake 20 minutes or until biscuits are brown. Carefully slit bag down the center. Place serving platter upside down on top of baking pan. Carefully invert pan over serving platter. Remove pan and bag. Serve warm. Makes 10 sticky buns.

Safety

by Col. William Antozzi, Boating Safety Officer

Buoys May Move

Along the coasts and navigable waters of the United States and its possessions, there are thousands of devices to give a mariner his exact position at all times, in any weather, in relation to the land and to hidden dangers. These devices range from steel and concrete structures, such as buoys and lighthouses, to invisible beacons of an electronics nature, such as radiobeacons, RACONS and LORAN. They are all designed for one purpose—aiding seaman.

Aids to navigation assist mariners in making landfalls when approaching from overseas, mark isolated dangers, make it possible for vessels to follow the natural and improved channels, and provide a continuous chain of charted marks for coastal piloting. As all aids to navigation serve the same general purpose, such structural differences as those between an unlighted buoy and a lightship, or a lighthouse and a radiobeacon, are solely for the purpose of meeting the conditions and requirements for the particular location at which the aid is to be established.

All aids to navigation (except private aids) in the waters over which the United States has jurisdiction are designed, built and maintained by the United States Coast Guard. It is a tremendous job. There are more than 40,000 aids to navigation in U.S. waters alone. This responsibility has been executed well, and today the United States has the best system of aids to navigation in the world.

We would like to think that the navigation aids are exactly where they are supposed to be, but the aids to navigation depicted on charts comprise a system of fixed and floating aids with varying degrees of reliability. Therefore, prudent mariners will not rely solely on any single aid to navigation, particularly a floating aid.

With respect to buoys, the buoy symbol is used to indicate the approximate position of the buoy body and the sinker which secures the buoy to the seabed. The approximate position is used because of practical limitations in positioning and maintaining buoys and their sinkers in precise geographical locations. These limitations include, but not limited to, inherent imprecisions in position for fixing methods, prevailing atmospheric and sea conditions, the slope of and the material making up the seabed, the fact that buoys are moored to sinkers by varying lengths of chains, and the fact that buoy body and/or sinker positions are not under continuous surveillance but are normally checked only during periodic maintenance visits which often occur more than a year apart. The position of the buoy body can be expected to shift inside and outside the charting symbol due to the forces of nature.

The mariner is also cautioned that buoys are liable to be carried away, shifted, capsized, sunk, etc. Lighted buoys may be extinguished or sound signals may not function as the result of ice, running ice or other natural causes, collisions, or other accidents.

For the foregoing reasons, a prudent mariner must not rely completely upon the position or operation of floating aids to navigation, but will also utilize bearings from fixed objects and aids to navigation on shore. Further, a vessel attempting to pass close aboard always risks collision with a yawing buoy or with the buoy anchor chain.

Soc Clay

Photo TipS

By Lynda Richardson

Your Third Magazine "Assignment"

Are you ready? Due to the popularity of *Virginia Wildlife*'s "Magazine Assignment" Photo Contest, we've decided to offer another "assignment" photography competition. As you might remember, last year's contest was on reflections as seen in nature. The results of that contest appeared in the January 1995 issue of *Virginia Wildlife*.

Smile! Ahhh, come on. Say "Cheese!" This year, your assignment is to travel anywhere in Virginia and photograph portraits. A portrait, as defined in *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, is a "pictorial representation (as a painting) of a person usually showing his face." In place of a person, I would like your portrait to be of a plant or an animal.

Entries will be judged on the photographer's creativity in selecting and portraying a natural subject. To help you along the way, a column on portraits will appear in the June 95 "Photo Tips."

"Your Third Magazine Assignment" rules are as follows:

1) Photographs must be shot in 35mm slide format. (This is for ease of handling and desirability for magazine use.)

Reproduction quality duplicate slides are acceptable if you don't want to send the originals. Please mark slides to indicate if they are duplicates or originals.

2) Since this is an "assignment," photographs must be taken between May 1, 1995 and September 1, 1995.

3) Deadline for this assignment is September 29, 1995. All photographs must be postmarked by September 29, 1995. Mail to Photo Tips Assignment, c/o *Virginia Wildlife*, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. Federal Express address is 4010 W. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230. I would recommend sending your photographs by certified, registered mail or by courier such as Federal Express which uses a tracking number to locate lost packages. Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered and will be returned immediately.

This adult female osprey unknowingly poses for a portrait while watching from her nest on the York River at Cheatham Annex near Williamsburg, Virginia; photo by Lynda Richardson.

4) All submissions must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) for the return of your slides. Submissions without SASEs will not be returned! All submissions, except the winning entries, will be mailed back by October 31, 1995. Winning entries will be returned by March 29, 1996. Whichever mailing method you choose, don't forget to include an additional envelope with enough postage or a filled out Federal Express form, including your account number, for us to return your slides to you. Please do not send money, checks, or loose stamps.

5) Slides will be accepted only if they are submitted in clear plastic storage sheets between two rigid pieces of cardboard. Slide sheets should be available at your local camera store.

6) On the front/bottom of each slide must appear your name, address and telephone number. Also, on the front of your slide, draw an arrow pointing to indicate the top of your slide. Number each slide. Slides will not be accepted if this information is not included on every slide.

7) Include with your entry a "Delivery Memo." This is a sheet of paper which has your name, address and telephone number at the top and a listing of your slides and total number you are sending. Refer to each slide by number in the Delivery Memo and include any necessary caption information. Don't forget to make a copy for yourself so you can make sure we get all your slides back to you.

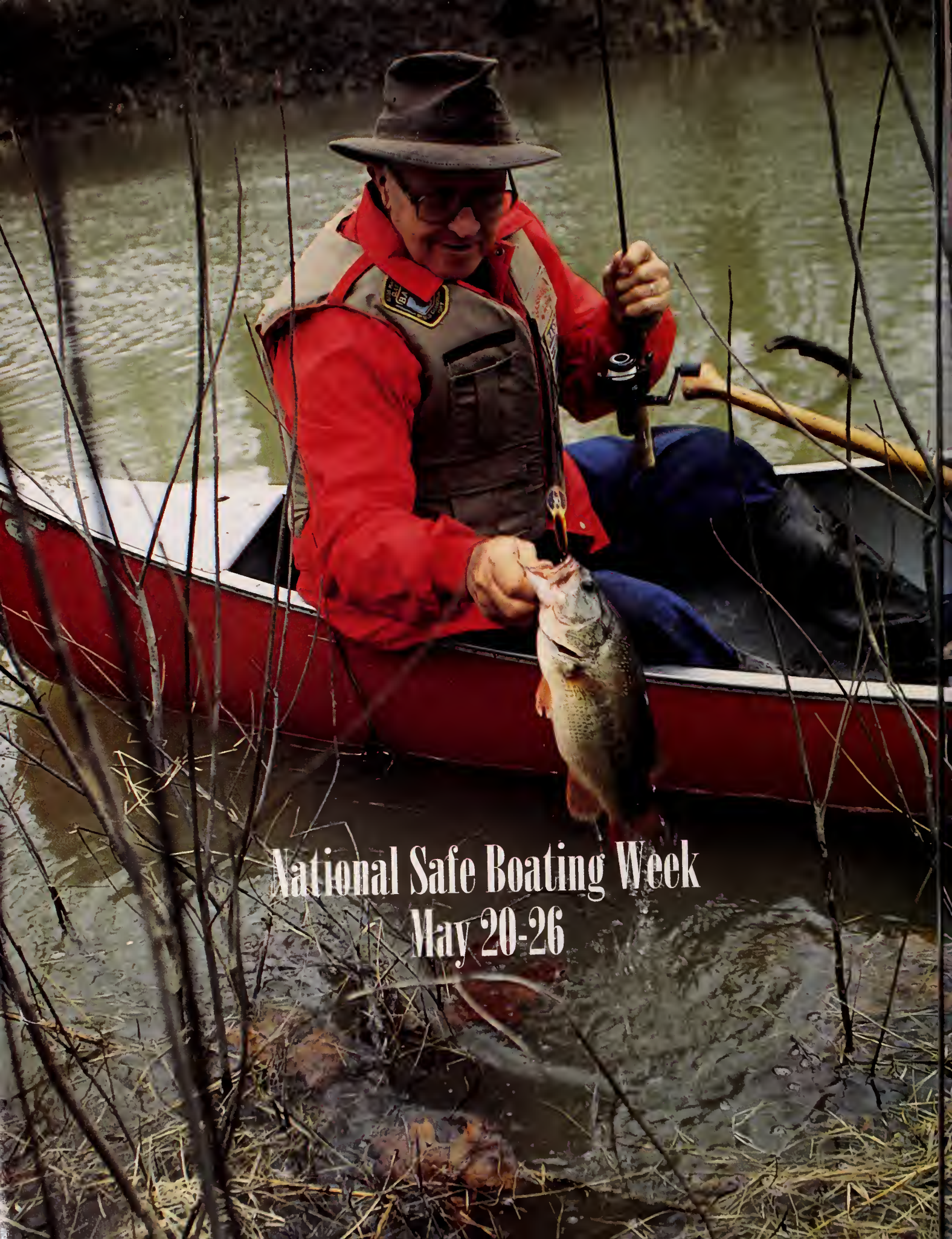
8) Submission is limited to five slides per person.

9) Neither *Virginia Wildlife* nor Lynda Richardson will be responsible for the receipt of damaged slides or the return of slides not accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

10) Though this is an "assignment," photographers will not be financially compensated for the use of their images, expenses incurred while shooting, film processing or time spent on assignment.

These rules might sound a bit tough, but this will give you an idea of what photographers have to go through every time they submit their work to magazines for possible use.

So, have fun! Take this opportunity to challenge yourself to photograph some fabulous portraits in nature. Good luck! I'll look forward to reviewing your assignments. □


National Safe Boating Week
May 20-26